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How to behave when you see a "lora"

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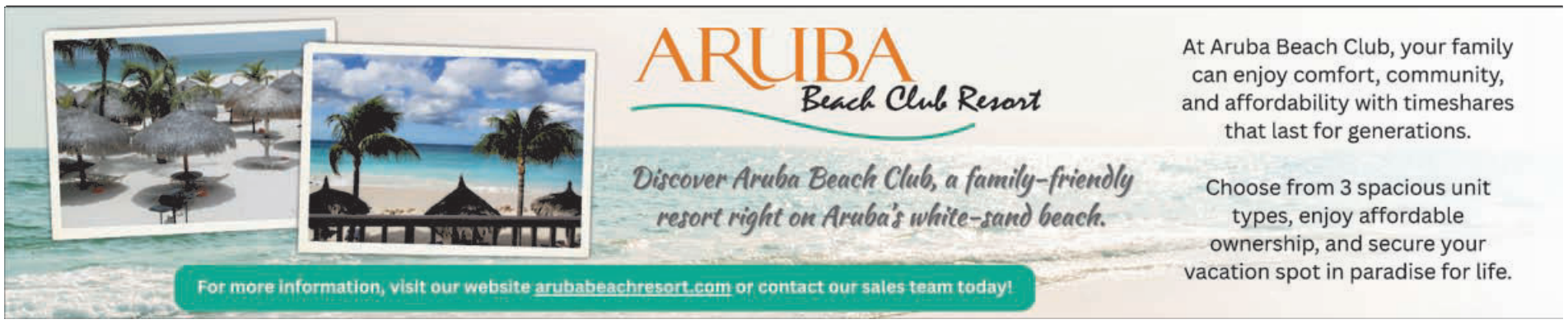


A full moon is seen shining over NASA's SLS (Space Launch System) and Orion spacecraft, atop the mobile launcher in the early hours of Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026, at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Associated Press

NASA delays astronauts' lunar trip until March after hydrogen leaks mar fueling test

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's long-awaited moonshot with astronauts is off until at least March because of hydrogen fuel leaks that marred the dress rehearsal of its giant new rocket.

It's the same problem that delayed the Space Launch System rocket's debut three years ago. That first test flight was grounded for months because of leaking hydrogen, which is highly flammable and dangerous. "Actually, this one caught us off guard," NASA's John Honeycutt said Tuesday, hours after the test came to an abrupt halt at Kennedy Space Center.

Until the exasperating fuel leaks, the space agency had been targeting as soon as this weekend for humanity's first trip to the moon in more than half a century.

"When you're dealing with hydrogen, it's a small molecule. It's highly energetic and we like it for that reason and we do the best we can," Honeycutt explained.

Officials said the month-long delay will allow the launch team to conduct another fueling test before committing the four astronauts three U.S. and one Canadian to a lunar fly-around. It's too soon to know when the countdown dress rehearsal might be repeated.

Any repairs to deformed or damaged seals, or other components, can likely be completed at the pad, managers said. A return to the Vehicle Assembly Building would likely result in an even longer delay.

The leaks cropped up early in Monday's loading operation and again hours later, ultimately halting the countdown clocks at the five-minute mark. Launch controllers had wanted to get all the way down to a half-minute in the countdown, but the escaping hydrogen exceeded safety limits.

NASA repeatedly interrupted the flow of liquid hydrogen, which was minus 423 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 253 degrees Celsius), in an attempt to warm up the area between the rocket and fuel lines and, hopefully, reseat any loose seals. But that didn't work and neither did altering the flow of the hydrogen

adjustments that allowed the first SLS rocket to finally soar without a crew in 2022. With their launch now off until at least March 6, commander Reid Wiseman and his crew were given the all-clear to emerge from quarantine in Houston. They will reenter it two weeks before the next launch attempt.

Wiseman said on the social platform X that he was proud of how the dress rehearsal went, "especially knowing how challenging the scenario was for our launch team doing the dangerous and unforgiving work."

The extreme cold at the launch site did not contribute to the fuel leaks or any other problem, according to officials. Heaters kept the Orion capsule warm atop the 322-foot (98-meter) rocket, while constant purging protected the rocket and ground systems.

Amit Kshatriya, NASA's associate administrator, stressed that the Space Launch System is "an experimental vehicle," with more lessons to be learned. Years between fueling tests and flights don't help, he added.❑

The wealthy ramp up spending while other Americans tread water, new study finds

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Higher-income Americans and those with college degrees have ramped up their spending more quickly in the past three years than other consumers, according to new data released Tuesday, evidence of worsening inequality that may explain some of the growing pessimism about the economy.

The data, released by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, also show that in the final three months of last year, lower-income and rural households faced higher inflation than higher-income households.

The spending data focuses only on goods excluding autos, and does not capture likely spending by higher-income households on travel, restaurants and entertainment.

The figures add support to the notion of a "K-shaped" economy, in which upper-income Americans are fueling a disproportionate share of the consumption that is the primary driver of the economy, while lower-income households see fewer gains. Poorer households in general often experience higher inflation, with a greater share of their spending being set aside for goods that have seen prices soar since the pandemic, things like housing, groceries, and utilities.

The New York Fed's data show that households with incomes of $125,000 and higher have boosted their spending 2.3%, adjusted for inflation, since 2023, while middle-income households those between $40,000 and $125,000 have increased their spending by 1.6%. Those earning below $40,000 have lifted their spending by just 0.9%, the report showed.

The figures are an addition to the New York Fed's economic heterogeneity indicators, a series of data sets intended to track variations in the economy by geographic region and demographic and income groups. The goal is to get a better sense of how different groups are faring, trends that can be shrouded by nationwide averages. The figures are derived from a group of 200,000 consumers tracked by the analytics firm Numerator. Their data closely tracks monthly retail sales released by the government, the New York Fed said.

The report underscores a pattern that has emerged since the pandemic: Lower-income households fared better in 2021 and 2022 when companies were desperate to hire and willing to pay, while the government also provided several economic stimulus checks. Yet beginning roughly in early 2023, hiring slowed and sharp gains in stock market fueled spending gains in wealthier households.

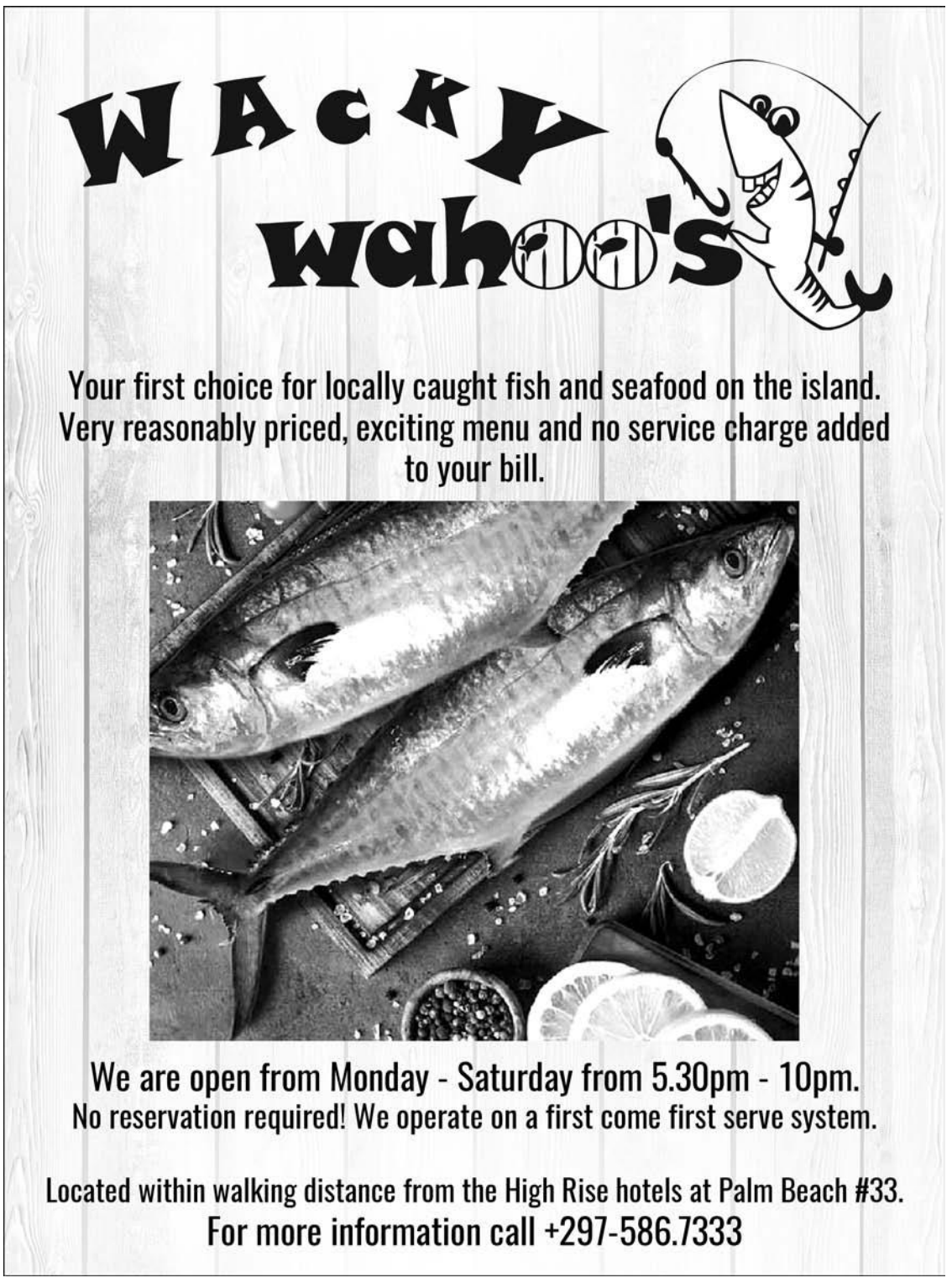
The division is also clear when examined through the lens of education. In 2023 and most of 2024, inflation-adjusted spending by non-college households fell below its January 2023 level. It only regained that level in November 2024, while households with a college graduate had by then boosted their spending by 4%.

The New York Fed notes that college-educated households continued to spend at a rapid pace in 2025 even as hiring slowed and there were a spate of job cuts in white-collar industries such as high tech, government and marketing.

"The difference in the trend in retail spending between college graduates and nongraduates is consistent with the story of a 'K-shaped economy,'" Rajashri Chakrabarti, an economic research advisor at the New York Fed, and three colleagues wrote.

The findings echo other recent research, including a short paper by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas last November. ❑

Diners eat at a restaurant in the Meatpacking District of Manhattan, Nov. 22, 2024, in New York.
Associated Press



Musk Inc.? Billionaire combines his rocket and AI businesses before an expected IPO this year

By BERNARD CONDON and MATT O'BRIEN
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Elon Musk is joining his space exploration and artificial intelligence ventures into a single company before what's expected to be a massive initial public offering for the business later this year.

His rocket venture, SpaceX, announced on Monday that it had bought xAI in an effort to help the world's richest man dominate the rocket and artificial intelligence businesses. The deal will combine several of his offerings, including his AI chatbot Grok, his satellite communications company Starlink, and his social media company X.

Musk has talked repeatedly about the need to speed development of technology that will allow data centers to operate in space. He believes that will help overcome the problem of huge costs in electricity and other resources in building and running AI systems on Earth. It's a goal that Musk suggested in his announcement of the deal could become easier to reach with a combined company.

"In the long term, space-based AI is obviously the only way to scale," Musk wrote on SpaceX's website Monday, then added in reference to solar power, "It's always sunny in space!"

Elon Musk attends a memorial for conservative activist Charlie Kirk, Sunday, Sept. 21, 2025, at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press

Musk said in his announcement he estimates "that within 2 to 3 years, the lowest cost way to generate AI compute will be in space."

SpaceX will be competing in that realm with Google, which is working on a research project called Project Suncatcher that would equip solar-powered satellites with AI computer chips, with a prototype that could launch as soon as next year.

But Musk's prediction of a near future of space-based AI supercomputers is not shared by many other companies building data centers, including Microsoft.

"I'll be surprised if people move from land to low-Earth orbit," Microsoft's president, Brad Smith, told The Associated Press last month, when asked about the alternatives to building data centers in the U.S. amid rising community opposition.

Musk is already facing stiff competition in artificial intelligence, where he's been scrambling to compete against rivals such as OpenAI, which is also working toward an IPO. Musk's dislike of OpenAI, which he helped to found more than a decade ago, is part of what drove him to start xAI in 2023 and build the ChatGPT alternative he named Grok.

Musk has equally ambitious plans for Tesla as he tries to pivot a company with shrinking car sales to focus more on self-driving taxis and humanoid robots, driven by artificial intelligence. Tesla recently announced a $2 billion investment in xAI.

Musk has used his control over multiple companies to combine operations before. Tesla bought SolarCity, a decade ago. And he recently had xAI buy his social media platform X, formerly called Twitter.

Chatter on Wall Street about the billionaire continuing to meld his many ventures together in a massive Musk Inc. has taken off in recent months, with some investors speculating that Tesla could combine with SpaceX, too.

Forbes magazine puts Musk's net worth at $768 billion. He also owns a brain implant company called Neuralink and a tunnel digging business named the Boring Company.

Terms of the SpaceX purchase of xAI were not disclosed.

Among outside investors in the companies is a fund in which President Donald Trump's son, Don Jr., is a partner. ❑

Robotaxi pioneer Waymo gets $16 billion injection to accelerate its expansion plans

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Technology Writer

Robotaxi pioneer Waymo has raised another $16 billion to help fuel its ambition for its fleet of self-driving cars to provide rides throughout the world while other deep-pocketed rival services backed by Tesla and Amazon try to catch up. The fundraising announced Monday values Waymo at $126 billion.

A Waymo driverless taxi stops on a street in San Francisco on Feb. 15, 2023.

Associated Press

The appraisal underscores investors' desire to own a piece of the rapidly expanding robotaxi market, as well as how far Waymo has come since starting as a "moonshot" project within Google 17 years ago. Analysts had estimated Waymo was worth about $30 billion just five years ago after a flurry of fundraising.

The new valuation may feed recurring speculation that Waymo will eventually pursue an initial public offering as part of a spinoff from corporate parent Alphabet Inc, which also owns Google.

Alphabet, which boasts a market value of nearly $4.2 trillion, led the fundraising that also included an array of prominent venture capitalists and investment funds.

In a blog post, Waymo said it plans to use the the money to extend its reach beyond the six metropolitan areas where its robotaxis already give rides in California, Arizona, Georgia, Texas and Florida. It's gearing up to enter more than 20 other cities, including London and Tokyo. Waymo's robotaxis already provide more than 400,000 weekly rides.

"We are positioned to move forward with unprecedented velocity, while maintaining our industry-leading safety standards," Waymo said in the post.

Although Waymo's robotaxis have so far compiled a mostly clean driving record, they have experienced various problems that have triggered community backlashes and regulatory inquiries.❑

Why China is building so many coal plants despite its solar and wind boom

By KEN MORITSUGU
Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Even as China's expansion of solar and wind power raced ahead in 2025, the Asian giant opened many more coal power plants than it had in recent years raising concern about whether the world's largest emitter will reduce carbon emissions enough to limit climate change. More than 50 large coal units individual boiler and turbine sets with generating capacity of 1 gigawatt or more were commissioned in 2025, up from fewer than 20 a year over the previous decade, a research report released Tuesday said. Depending on energy use, 1 gigawatt can power from several hundred thousand to more than 2 million homes.

Overall, China brought 78 gigawatts of new coal power capacity online, a sharp uptick from previous years, according to the joint report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, which studies air pollution and its impacts, and Global Energy Monitor, which develops databases tracking energy trends.

"The scale of the buildout is staggering," said report co-author Christine Shearer of Global Energy Monitor. "In 2025 alone, China commissioned more coal power capacity than India did over the entire past decade."

At the same time, even larger additions of wind and solar capacity nudged down the share of coal in total power generation last year. Power from coal fell about 1% as growth in cleaner energy sources covered all the increase in electricity demand last year. China added 315 gigawatts of solar capacity and 119 gigawatts of wind in 2025, according to statistics from the government's National Energy Administration.

A power plant is seen near Shenyang in northwestern China's Liaoning province on Jan. 3, 2026.
Associated Press

Blackouts in 2021-22 prompted coal plant building spree

The massive growth in wind and solar begs the question: Why is China still building coal power plants and, by most analyses, way more than it actually needs?

The answer is complicated. China is at an earlier development stage than the United States or Europe, so it needs more energy to keep growing. If more of the nation's 1.4 billion people climb into the middle class, more will be able to afford air conditioners and washing machines.

Electricity is needed to keep China's factories humming and to meet the high power demands of artificial intelligence, a government priority as it seeks to make the country a leader in technology.

Power shortages in parts of China in 2021 and 2022 reinforced longstanding concerns about energy security. Some factories temporarily halted production and one city imposed rolling blackouts.

The government's response was to signal that it wanted more coal plants, leading to a surge in applications and permits for their construction.

That 2022-23 surge drove the big jump in capacity last year as the new units came on line, said Qi Qin, an analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air and another co-author of the report. "Once permits are issued, projects are difficult to reverse," she said. Construction started on 83 gigawatts of coal power last year, the report said, suggesting a large amount of new capacity may come online this year.

Excess coal capacity could slow the transition to wind and solar

The government position is that coal provides a stable backup to sources such as wind and solar, which are affected by weather and the time of day. The shortages in 2022 resulted partly from a drought that hit hydropower, a major energy source in western China.

Coal should "play an important underpinning and balancing role" for years to come, the National Development and Reform Commission, the lead economic planning agency, said in guidance issued last year on making coal plants cleaner and more efficient.❑

13-year-old swims for hours to save family swept out to sea

By ROD McGUIRK
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — A 13-year-old boy is credited with saving the lives of his mother and two younger siblings with an hourslong swim after the family was swept out to sea off the Australian coast.

Austin Appelbee swam 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) to shore to raise the alarm after he got into difficulties on Friday with his mother Joanne Appelbee, 47, brother Beau, 12, and sister Grace, 8, police said.

Austin said he initially set off for help on an inflatable kayak that was taking water. He abandoned the kayak then took off his life jacket because it impeded his swimming.

He said he tried to focus on positive thoughts as he swam for around four hours through rough seas for shore, raising the alarm at 6 p.m.

"The waves are massive and I have no life jacket on. … I just kept thinking 'just keep swimming, just keep swimming,'" Austin said on Tuesday. "And then I finally I made it to shore and I hit the bottom of the beach and I just collapsed."

The family, from the state capital Perth, were on vacation and were using kayaks and paddle boards hired from their hotel around noon when rough ocean and wind conditions started dragging them out to sea.

A search helicopter found the mom and two children wearing life jackets and clinging to a paddleboard at 8:30 p.m., police said.❑

Austin Appelbee, right, poses with his brother, Beau, left, his mother, Joanne, second left, and sister Grace, in Gidgegannup, Australia, Tuesday Feb. 3, 2026, after 13-year-old Austin made an hourslong swim to raise an alarm after his family was swept out to sea off the Australian coast.
Associated Press

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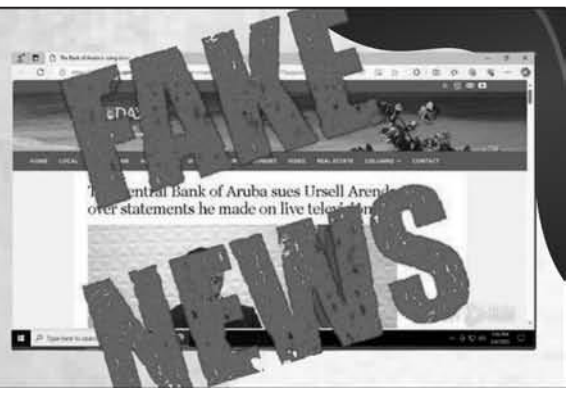

Kiefer honors forgotten female alchemists in war-scarred Milan ballroom with monumental exhibition

By COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — German contemporary artist Anselm Kiefer pays tribute to one of Milan's most majestic yet melancholy spaces inside Palazzo Reale with the site-specific exhibition titled "The Women Alchemists,'' previewed on Tuesday as part of the city's cultural programming for the 2026 Winter Olympics

The artist was inspired by the crumbling caryatids, or sculpted female figures that served as architectural supports, inside the palace's Sala delle Cariatidi, a ceremonial hall severely damaged in a 1943 Allied bombing during World War II.

A view of the presentation of Anselm Kiefer's exhibition Le Alchimiste at Palazzo Reale, part of the official cultural programme for the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Milan, Italy, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026.
Associated Press

Kiefer said he was immediately inspired by the room and the fragmented female figures, left as a memorial to the destruction of war.

"I quickly came to the idea of the women alchemists, that is, women who were equal with men, who experimented with medicine exactly as men,'' said Kiefer, 80, one of Germany's most acclaimed postwar artists known for monumental works that examine history, memory and collective trauma.

He set to work on 42 panels, some six meters (nearly 19 feet) tall, each featuring a female alchemist whose contributions to early chemistry and medicine were lost to history, elevating male achievement instead.

Despite the subject matter, the artist insisted his was not a feminist exhibition.

"I am half woman. How can it be feminist?'' he asked a packed conference room, to applause.

The show's curator, Gabriella Belli, clarified that the show was "an act of important recognition, and not necessarily an act of justice or feminism.''

Kiefer initially wanted to hang the paintings high on the wall above the fragile caryatids, but that wasn't allowed.

Instead, the paintings zig-zag across the ballroom floor like ornamental screens, creating a pathway for visitors to reflect on the lives of the 38 women depicted, including Milan's own Caterina Sforza, whose father was Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan from 1466-1476.

The images play off the original wall mirrors by the artist's intention, creating "an interaction between what is hidden, and what is revealed,'' Kiefer said. He achieved the effect by recreating the museum space in his studio, placing mirrors in their corresponding positions. Kiefer represents each of his female alchemists in full figure, contrasting with the crumbling half-bodies of the caryatids.❑

Children with disabilities find joy and support through horse therapy in Taiwan

A boy hugs a horse during an equine-assisted therapy course at the Therapeutic Riding Centre in Taoyuan in northern Taiwan on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026.
Associated Press

By TAIJING WU
Associated Press

TAOYUAN, Taiwan (AP) — The young woman smiles widely as she prepares to get on the horse for her weekly ride. She laughs as the horse takes its first steps.

"The first time she got on a horse, she was happy," said Hector Chen of their initial visit. His daughter, Chen You-ching, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy more than 16 years ago. Since then, he has brought the now 18-year-old to horse therapy.

At the Therapeutic Riding Center of Taiwan in Taoyuan, a city in the island's northern region, children with cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD and other conditions find companionship and therapy through riding and interacting with horses.

Animal-assisted therapy is gaining popularity across the world, whether it's working with children with intellectual disabilities or veterans dealing with trauma.

Abigail Liu said her 5-year old daughter has benefited from the therapy immensely. Her daughter, Ayah, has Angelman Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that causes delayed development.

She said her daughter "started to be less scared about things she doesn't know and is willing to try (new things). All this started after she rode horses here."

The horses need special training to deal with the movements of a child or to stay calm when multiple people surround it, said Chan Shu-ya, a horse therapist.❑

PSA from the Aruba Conservation Foundation:

How to behave when you see a "lora"

(Oranjestad)— The conservation of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon, also known as the 'Lora,' relies on how we act as humans. We've seen many hikers who've encountered the 'Lora' in our protected nature areas and we can certainly imagine the pride and joy it brings to any Aruban. However, not everyone may know how to behave when encountering these clever and social birds. This guide is here to explain the behaviors that will most effectively help us in our efforts to conserve the 'Lora.' Please, don't just read but also follow these guidelines so we can ensure the survival of these birds for future generations.

No interfering, please

Please refrain from interfering with the "Lora". The Lora is a highly intelligent and social animal, perhaps slightly too friendly because they have gotten used to the rangers as they prepared for their re-introduction. However, it is our collective responsibility to help them adapt to the wild once again. Please play your part by not interfering (calling, provoking etc.) with the Lora. Simply enjoy their beauty from a safe distance.

Be respectful and keep cats and dogs away

Pets and strays such as cats and dogs are prone to attacking other animals, especially birds, as part of their natural instincts. Please make sure your pets are kept inside of your yard or are kept on a leash when going out for a walk.

Do not feed them food or water

You may think that giving the any food or water is doing a good deed, but it actually does not contribute to them developing survival skills in the wild. By interfering with the survival instincts of wild animals, we are doing the opposite of helping. Therefore, please do not attempt to give the Loras food or water.

Capturing a Lora is against the law!

The biggest threat to the Lora before their extinction in 1947 was caused by human activities including poaching and killing of the Lora. Let's work collectively to prevent this from happening again. So when you see the Lora, enjoy their beauty from a distance and admire them as they flourish in the wild.❑

Fun facts about cacti hedges "Trankera"

(Oranjestad) – When off-roading in inland Aruba, you may notice some cacti hedges around various properties or lined up by certain pathways. These man-made hedges are called "trankera" and play an important role in maintaining our flora and fauna.

The trankera dates to colonialism, where settlers established several 'cunucu' (farm) on the island. People either used stone walls or trankera as a fence to ward off strangers and wild animals that can feed on the cunucu vegetation or cattle.

Nowadays, trankeras are less common, and those that still stand are often not maintained. On the surface this seems like a bad development, however this proved to be beneficial for our flora and fauna. Naturally developed flora around the hedges offers more shelter for fauna. Another aspect is the propagation process. When pruning hedges, flowers and seeds were removed, which limits propagation to a minimum.

So, though trankeras don't play that big of a role in Aruba's agriculture anymore, our environment still reaps the benefits of these long-standing natural structures.❑

CAYA Introduces a Bold New Menu Celebrating Latin Caribbean Flavors

(Oranjestad)—CAYA, one of Aruba's most beloved dining destinations, continues to celebrate the vibrant essence of Latin Caribbean cuisine with an exciting new menu that beautifully balances tradition and innovation.

Nestled in a beautifully restored traditional Aruban Cunucu house, surrounded by lush tropical greenery, CAYA offers guests a dining experience that feels both authentic and contemporary. The restaurant's philosophy is simple yet profound: to create a space where the warmth of island hospitality meets the creativity of modern gastronomy.

The new menu reflects this vision with a series of inspired dishes that showcase the diversity of Caribbean and Latin American flavors. From Cuba to Colombia, and from Aruba to Mexico, each plate tells a story rooted in heritage and reimagined through CAYA's modern lens.

Among the standout new appetizers are the **Tuna al Tamarindo**, featuring thinly sliced tuna sashimi served with tamarind *leche de tigre*, creamy avocado, marinated onions, radishes, cilantro, and crispy tortillas dusted with *tajín*; and the **Beef Stew Croquettes**, a playful nod to Caribbean comfort food, served with truffle and black garlic mayonnaise. Guests can also savor the **Beef and Pork Brochettas**, made with locally smoked bacon, *Madam Jeannette* peppers, local honey, and tenderloin, grilled to perfection and served with *chimichurri espuma*.

The main courses bring equal excitement. Highlights include the **Chilean Sea Bass**, pan fried and served with a smooth carrot and *ají amarillo* sauce, creamy garlic mashed potatoes, grilled paksoi and broccoli, hearts of palm, toasted cashews, and a fragrant lime leaf vinaigrette. Another showstopper is the **Duck and Rice**, a Caribbean interpretation of a Peruvian classic, featuring pan fried duck breast with aromatic green rice infused with local herbs, kombucha, and *ají amarillo*, finished with a pan fried egg and *sarsa criolla*.

Dessert lovers are in for a treat as well. The **Caribbean Black Forest** reimagines the classic with a tropical twist, featuring a rich brownie served with red fruit, coconut mousse, chocolate, and banana rum ice cream. The **Merengon Tropical** delights with sage panna cotta, mango and pineapple compote, mango sorbet, and citrus meringue.

Guests can also enjoy CAYA's new *Sabor Experience*, a limited time three course menu priced at $79, allowing diners to explore an appetizer, main course, and dessert of their choice.

To complete the experience, CAYA hosts live music every Sunday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., setting the perfect backdrop for an evening of island charm and culinary artistry.

CAYA continues to invite locals and visitors alike to experience the heart of Aruba, where Latin Caribbean heritage comes alive in every dish, every note of music, and every heartfelt welcome.❑

"Aruba is to me...donkeys!"

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ……. Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Glenn and JoAnn Murphy from Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba is to me...donkeys! Each year that my dear wife and I return to our "One Happy Island" we HAVE TO stop by the Donkey Sanctuary to feed a few bags of carrots to our beloved donkeys. There we laugh and squeal when surrounded and bumped by our hungry furry friends during the carrot "feeding frenzy." Later we sit peacefully at the sanctuary hut taking in the sweet sound of roosters crowing and delight in the strutting of the majestic peacocks. There we find our own moments of Sanctuary from the frenetic pace of life back at home in the states. Thank you Awesome Aruba!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!❑

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Every Wednesday | 10am to Midnight
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Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Moments & Memories Jewelry
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
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Infini Launches New Menu 14 Following Its Five-Year Anniversary Celebration

Infini has officially launched Menu 14, a special edition menu unveiled in celebration of the restaurant's five-year anniversary. The new menu revisits guests' favorite dishes from the past five years, blending nostalgia with fresh interpretations inspired by Infini's signature approach to modern gastronomy.

Infini stands for limitless possibilities, and Menu 14 perfectly embodies that philosophy. Crafted by Chef Urvin Croes, the menu celebrates innovation, creativity, and fearless exploration. Known for pushing boundaries through storytelling, technique, and flavor, Chef Urvin continues to redefine Aruba's fine dining scene. Infini's immersive chef's table concept invites guests to interact directly with the culinary team, transforming each dish into a chapter of an evolving narrative.

Before opening Infini, Chef Urvin honed his craft in Aruba's most prestigious hotel restaurants, rising from apprentice cook to Sous Chef, and gaining international experience at the Michelin-rated Grand Hotel Karel V in Europe. His mission has always been to position Aruba as a leading culinary destination by reimagining local recipes with modern techniques and artistic precision.
Dedicated to supporting local farmers and producers, Chef Urvin incorporates homegrown ingredients that reflect the island's rich food culture. His collaborations with these artisans are essential to Infini's distinctive culinary identity.

With numerous awards to his name—including being crowned the first-ever Iron Chef Aruba—Chef Urvin remains grounded in his passion, curiosity, and love for sharing Aruba's story through food.

Menu 14 invites diners to taste, explore, and rediscover Infini's journey while looking forward to the limitless possibilities ahead. Reservations are highly recommended to experience this new chapter in Infini's evolving culinary story.❑

Beautiful areas around Aruba

(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge
Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why is easy, it's way too dangerous to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due fear of height. To reach this beauty you must go to San Nicolas and drive up the hill till The Point Lighthouse, park your car and walk until you reach the east point coast and go left along the coastline and good luck going down the cliff.

Surfside Beach
This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovated the whole area it got a new facelift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach
As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. ❑

Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses.

Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you want to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4×4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4×4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari

Here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities.❑

Stimami Sterilisami has sterilized more than 46,350 dogs and cats and will continue to offer 100% free sterilization throughout 2026

Stimami Sterilisami achieved another year of major impact in its ongoing dedication to alleviating animal suffering in Aruba through the sterilization of dogs and cats. During 2025, the foundation successfully financed the sterilization of 6,405 dogs and cats, a remarkable achievement that brings the total number of sterilizations since 2016 to 46,352.

The results of 2025 were made possible thanks to a collective effort, distributed as follows:

- Caduary Veterinary Clinic, in collaboration with Luna Foundation: 2,424 sterilizations
- Animal Welfare Alliance Aruba (AWAA), focused on low-income families: 1,652 sterilizations
- Veterinary Specialty Hospital (animals sterilized through rescue foundations): 1,322 sterilizations
- Veterinary Specialty Hospital (animals sterilized by individual owners): 859 sterilizations

These are not just numbers; they are lives changed, suffering prevented, and a healthier and safer future for animals, our community, and public health for the Aruban community as a whole.

Gratitude to Our Donors and Partners That Make This Possible

Our heartfelt thank you goes out to our donors and volunteers who support our mission, including Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Tourism Product Enhancement Fund (TPEF), Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA), One Love Foundation Inc., Setar N.V., Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association (AHATA), and every organization and private donor who has supported this mission in 2025 and the years before. Your belief in prevention, compassion, and responsibility makes this meaningful work possible.

"We are also profoundly grateful to the partners who made this impact possible, including our dedicated veterinary clinics, VSH Veterinary Specialty Hospital and Caduary Veterinary Clinic, whose collaboration with Luna Foundation has been instrumental. We are also grateful for our partnership with the Animal Welfare Alliance Aruba (AWAA), a no-cost spay and neuter clinic dedicated to helping cats and dogs of low-income families. In total, AWAA performed 4,687 surgeries in 2025, of which 1,322 were subsidized by Stimami Sterilisami.

We further thank the rescue organizations that worked tirelessly to bring animals to the clinics, and the Aruban community and pet owners who chose to spay and neuter their pets, protecting their health and preventing unwanted litters.

We are also grateful to partner with and support the Snoop Doggy Foundation, whose educational books on responsible pet ownership help inspire the next generation to care for animals with compassion, responsibility, and respect."

We are also proud to collaborate with and support the Snoop Doggy Foundation, whose educational book on responsible pet care inspires the next generation to treat animals with love, responsibility, and respect.

A humanitarian and proven program Aruba cannot afford to lose

The impact of sterilization is cumulative, and the risk of overpopulation can grow rapidly if the work is suspended. In Aruba's climate, where breeding takes place year-round, a single unsterilized animal can lead to rapid population growth. For example, one unsterilized female cat, together with her descendants, can produce more than 11 million cats in just six years. An unsterilized male dog can result in more than 67,000 descendants in the same period. These figures clearly demonstrate how overpopulation can quickly get out of control without timely and sufficiently scaled intervention.

Without a continuous sterilization effort, thousands of new dogs and cats will be born every year, putting pressure on shelters and rescue foundations, increasing animal suffering, and negatively impacting our community and our tourism-based economy. While stronger laws, better enforcement, and more responsible ownership are necessary, the root cause of the problem remains the lack of prevention.

Sterilization remains the most efficient, humane, and sustainable solution within our power to reduce suffering and protect public health, the environment, and the well-being of our community.❑

For more information or to contribute, visit: www.stimamisterilisami.com

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Account Name:
FUNDASHON STIMAMI STERILISAMI
Swift Code: ARUBAWAX

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

ORANJESTAD—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is

said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or

when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

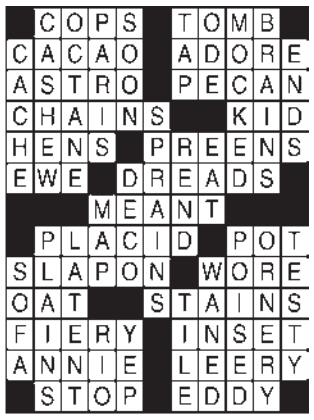
Eggplant kataplan* can

also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.❑

***warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.**
***kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.**

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

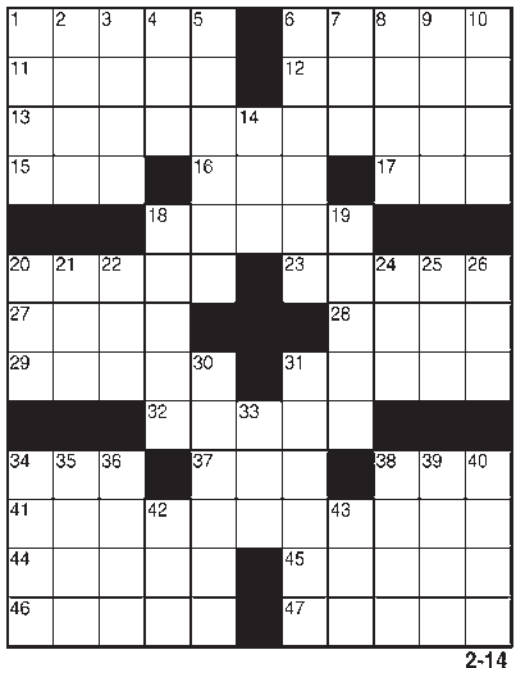


ACROSS

1 Like some notebook paper
6 Taking to court
11 Dote on
12 Passion
13 Barbra Streisand hit
15 Compass dir.
16 Pen fill
17 Fall behind
18 Jeans material
20 Valentine's Day gift
23 Frisco player
27 Opera piece
28 Cairo's river
29 Polite chaps
31 Amorous archer
32 Corridors
34 Cash dispenser
37 Golf peg
38 Desire
41 Beyoncé hit
44 Microwave feature
45 Gives over
46 Stretches over
47 Valentine symbol

DOWN

1 Statutes
2 Wedding vows
3 Alaskan city
4 Memorable time
5 Disavows
6 Registered
7 Online address
8 Revered one
9 Flaring star
10 Golfer Norman
14 Tourist stop
18 Ominous tarot card
19 Less
20 Cloth scrap
21 Metal source
22 Lust, e.g.
24 Tiny taste
25 Yale rooter
26 Valentine color
30 Nymph chasers
31 Hold tightly
33 Floral garland
34 Play parts
35 Journey
36 Baby's call
38 Luke's teacher
39 At any time
40 Egg setting
42 Buddhism branch
43 Spike of film



2-14

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-14 CRYPTOQUOTE

O B K K I Y P O W J R J P U O Q Z K

T N V J I X R O Z Q , O Z I N Q Z K Y

N Z Y J Z Y K Z O P P N W N Z B .

— R O K Y E M

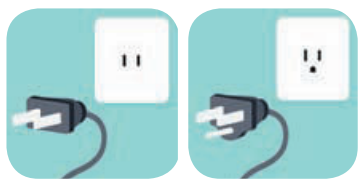
Cryptoquote: TO LOVE AND BE LOVED IS TO FEEL THE SUN FROM BOTH SIDES. — DAVID VISCOTT

Cruise ship Schedule: Feb. 2 - 8 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	02	OCEANIA NAUTICA	07.00	19.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	03	CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	B	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
WED	04	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	05	SILVER SHADOW	13.00	****	B	1
		BRILLIANT LADY	10.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	13.30	22.30	I	1
FRI	06	*SILVER SHADOW - Dept.*	****	18.00	B	-
		MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN STAR	11.00	20.00	I	1
SAT	07	CARNIVAL LEGEND	09.00	22.00	C	1
SUN	08	CARNIVAL MIRACLE	09.00	22.00	B	1
		CELEBRITY ASCENT	09.00	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

4								
	8		2	4			6	
3		5	7			4		
	5			1				
			9	7		1	3	
		7	3			5		9
		6		9			4	
1				2				
	4	9					7	1

Difficulty: ★★★ 2/4

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Answer to previous puzzle

8	4	9	3	7	6	1	2	5
6	1	5	2	9	8	3	7	4
2	7	3	1	5	4	8	6	9
5	8	7	9	4	1	2	3	6
4	3	2	8	6	7	5	9	1
1	9	6	5	3	2	7	4	8
7	2	4	6	1	5	9	8	3
9	5	8	4	2	3	6	1	7
3	6	1	7	8	9	4	5	2

Difficulty: ★★ 2/3

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Agave or bust! Mexican long-nosed bats head farther north in search of sweet nectar

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN
Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Mexican long-nosed bats have a taste for agave, their tongues designed to lap up the famous desert plant's nectar during nightly flights. It's not just a means of satisfying taste buds. It's a matter of fueling up for an arduous journey.

The endangered species migrates each summer from Mexico into the southernmost reaches of the United States. Big Bend National Park in Texas is a destination, as is Hidalgo County in New Mexico's Bootheel. It wasn't until last year that DNA evidence helped to add Arizona to the list.

Bat Conservation International announced on Tuesday that swabbing agave plants and hummingbird feeders on the fringes of New Mexico's Gila National Forest also turned up proof that the bats are farther north than ever before.

The research shows they're traveling about 100 miles (160 kilometers) beyond their known roosts in New Mexico.

The state's Bootheel region has been hit hard by drought, and agaves there don't seem to flower as much as they used to, said Kristen Lear, director of the Agave Restoration Initiative at Bat Conservation International.

This photo provided by Bat Conservation International shows a Mexican long-nosed bat (Leptonycteris nivalis) feeding on the nectar of a blooming agave in July 2022, Nuevo León, Mexico.
Associated Press

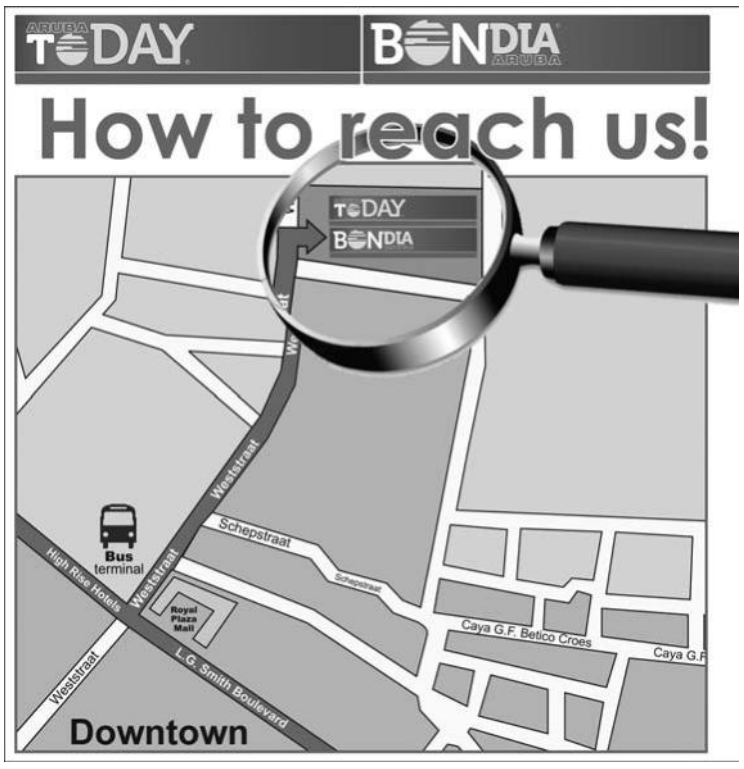
"We think these bats are trying to look for healthy agave food sources elsewhere," she said. "So that's kind of driving them farther north, where the agaves are a little bit less hit by drought."

Traveling another 30 miles (48 kilometers) can add another night to a bat's journey. To keep the sweet nectar flowing along the route, researchers on both sides of the international border say restoration of desert grasslands on the fringes of where the bats have been found in the past will be key to ensuring the future of the winged mammals and the genetic diversity of agaves.

The Mexican long-nosed bat was added to the endangered species list in 1988. It's estimated that fewer than 10,000 remain.

Complicating matters is that both Mexican long-nosed bats and agaves are slow breeders. The bats have only one baby or pup per year. Agaves, which rely on the bats for pollination, can take a decade or more to flower and produce seeds.

"So you're not going to get huge population rebounds quickly. ❑



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Imsan 24 hours
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PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:
Oduber: Tel.582 1780
San Nicolas:
Aloe: Tel.584 4606

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	**100**
Oranjestad	**527 3140**
Noord	**527 3200**
Sta. Cruz	**527 2900**
San Nicolas	**584 5000**
Police Tipline	**11141**
Ambulancia	**911**
Fire Dept.	**115**
Red Cross	**582 2219**

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	**587 5900**
Prof. Taxi	**588 0035**
Taxi D.T.S.	**587 2300**
Taxi Serv. Aruba	**583 3232**
A1 Taxi Serv.	**280 2828**

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	**524 2424**
American Airlines	**582 2700**
Avianca	**588 0059**
Jet Blue	**588 2244**
Surinam	**582 7896**

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002

FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

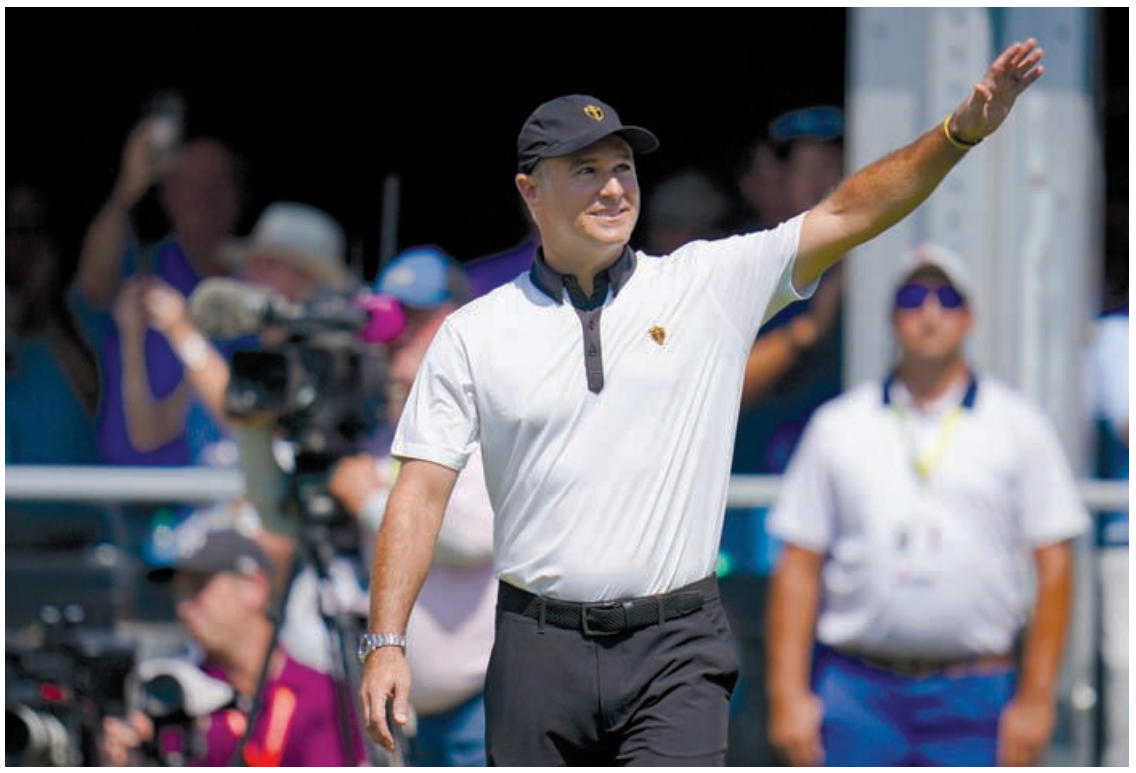
LIV Golf to get world ranking points for the first time. Only the top 10 players get them

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

LIV Golf received a boost on the eve of starting its fifth season when the Official World Golf Ranking approved the Saudi-funded league to receive ranking points for the first time.

The unanimous decision Tuesday by the OWGR board came with some conditions, however, that did not sit well with LIV Golf CEO Scott O'Neil.

Points will be distributed only for top-10 finishes and ties, compared with other tours that have smaller fields and leave out only the bottom finishers.



International team captain Trevor Immelman waves toward the gallery before a foursomes match at the Presidents Cup golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club, Sept. 22, 2022, in Charlotte, N.C. Associated Press

"No other competitive tour or league in OWGR history has been subjected to such a restriction," LIV said in a statement.

For its 57-player league, LIV will get points based on a "Small Field Tournament" category that also applies to tournaments like the Tour Championship and the PGA Tour's signature events that do not have a cut.

"Under these rules, a player finishing 11th in a LIV Golf event is treated the same as a player finishing 57th," the LIV statement said. "Limiting points to only the top 10 finishers disproportionately harms players who consistently perform at a high level but finish just outside that threshold, as well as emerging talent working to establish themselves on the world stage precisely the players a fair and meritocratic ranking system is designed to recognize."

Considering that LIV Golf has been without ranking points since the league launched in 2022, its strength of field will be lower.

Tyrrell Hatton at No. 22 and two-time U.S. Open champion Bryson DeChambeau at No. 33 are the only LIV players in the top 50, with five others among the top 100. Jon Rahm, the last player before Scottie Scheffler to be No. 1 in the world, now is at No. 97.

The decision is effective immediately as LIV Golf begins Wednesday in Saudi Arabia.

"It's a big day, and a positive day in my mind," Trevor Immelman, a former Masters champion and OWGR chairman, said in a telephone interview. "It's been a long process, it's been exhausting in many ways, with a whole host of people from outside being involved and working around the clock to make this decision before LIV plays its first event."

LIV's season opener in Riyadh is likely to award about 23 points to the winner, compared with nearly 47 points to Chris Gotterup when he won the Sony Open, the weakest field in the early part of the PGA Tour season. The Phoenix Open winner this week gets about 59 points.

LIV would get slightly more points than the Qatar Masters on the European tour this week.

Even so, it would be a boost for a LIV player if he gets on a roll, such as Joaquin Niemann winning five times last year and Rahm finishing in the top 10 in all but one of the 13 events.

The world ranking is important because the four majors use it to help determine fields. The U.S. Open and British Open created categories for LIV players when they weren't getting ranking points. The Masters and PGA Championship took care of worthy players through special invitations.

The board decision ends a debate that has been around almost as long as LIV. The OWGR rejected the first application in October 2023 when former chairman Peter Dawson said the board could not fairly measure LIV against the other tours.

The question was not about the quality of players, but rather how they could be ranked equitably with thousands of other players across 24 tours because LIV was perceived as having a closed shop instead of pathways and turnover.

"We fully recognized the need to rank the top men's players in the world but at the same time had to find a way of doing so that was equitable to the thousands of other players competing on other tours that operate with established meritocratic pathways," Immelman said in the OWGR announcement. "We believe we have found a solution that achieves these twin aims."

Immelman, now the lead CBS Sports analyst, became OWGR chairman last year and had been in constant contact with O'Neil.

LIV has gone from 54 holes to 72 holes for 2026, though that wasn't a big obstacle in getting world ranking points because other smaller tours around the world also have 54-hole events. Rather it was the turnover in LIV, and the self-selection of adding players with contracts.

It also expanded its field size by three to 57 players, still short of the average field size of 75 the OWGR preferred. It expanded its "relegation zone" to 11 players who get dropped and have to earn their way back through a qualifying event or the Asian Tour's International Series points list.

The board worked around those issues to make LIV Golf the 25th circuit in the OWGR.

"It's extremely important for us to be able to rank the best players in the world as accurately as possible," Immelman said. "That has been at the top of my mind throughout this process that I've been involved in. I'm thankful to Scott for his time and effort in this.

"I dream of a world in the men's professional game where everybody is working together and fans enjoy the great golf being played all over the world. That's been my North Star since I took this role."

The PGA Tour and European tour commercially known as the DP World Tour recused themselves from the OWGR decision in October when LIV's application was rejected. The full board was involved in the decision Tuesday.

LIV said it saw the decision as a "first step toward a structure that fully and fairly serves the players, the fans, and the future of the sport."

"We entered this process in good faith and will continue to advocate for a ranking system that reflects performance over affiliation," LIV said.

"The game deserves transparency. The fans deserve credibility. And the players deserve a system that treats them equally."❑

ARUBA TODAY

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As the trade deadline nears, a history-based look at how this NBA season may end

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

The trade deadline is Thursday. The new U.S. vs. The World edition of the All-Star Game is Feb. 15. There will be some buyout moves in the coming weeks. And, to everyone's dismay, there will be some tanking down the stretch of the season in pursuit of better odds at the draft lottery.

That's the schedule.

Not a single playoff spot has been locked up, and technically, no team has even been eliminated from playoff contention yet. There are some reasonable assumptions to make Oklahoma City, Detroit, San Antonio, Denver, New York and Boston seem like locks for the playoffs, and plenty of other teams can safely assume that they'll be no worse than a play-in team.

On the flip side of that, Utah, Brooklyn, Washington, Indiana, New Orleans and Sacramento ... it's not looking good. (Milwaukee and Memphis need miracles to get back into the mix, and the soon-to-be-settled, one-way-or-another trade talk around Giannis Antetokounmpo and Ja Morant will likely dictate what happens the rest of this season with the Bucks and Grizzlies.) Historically, the 50-game mark of the season all teams have either hit that milestone already or will reach it this week is the point where some conclusions can be gleaned, where some tendencies can be noted when trying to figure out which teams are the most likely to be the last team standing when Commissioner Adam Silver hands out the Larry O'Brien Trophy in June.

And some trends definitely jump out. The eventual NBA champion, at the 50-game mark, has some distinct characteristics.

Among them:

Must be over .500

The 1977-78 Washington Bullets were 26-24 through 50 games, and that's the worst record at that point in a season for any team that went on to win a championship.

This rules out Chicago, the Los Angeles Clippers, Atlanta, Portland, Charlotte, Dallas, Milwaukee, Memphis, Utah, Brooklyn, Washington, Indiana, New Orleans and Sacramento.

Just like that, the list of 30 teams quickly gets pared down to 16 hopefuls.

Over 30 wins preferred

Only five teams have had fewer than 30 wins through 50 games and won the NBA title: those 1977-78 Bullets, along with four teams in the league's first decade the 1946-47 Philadelphia Warriors, the 1947-48 Baltimore Bullets, the 1950-51 Rochester Royals and the 1954-55 Syracuse Nationals.

If that form holds, six more teams fall off the contender list at this point.

Ruled out: Toronto, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Golden State, Miami and Orlando.

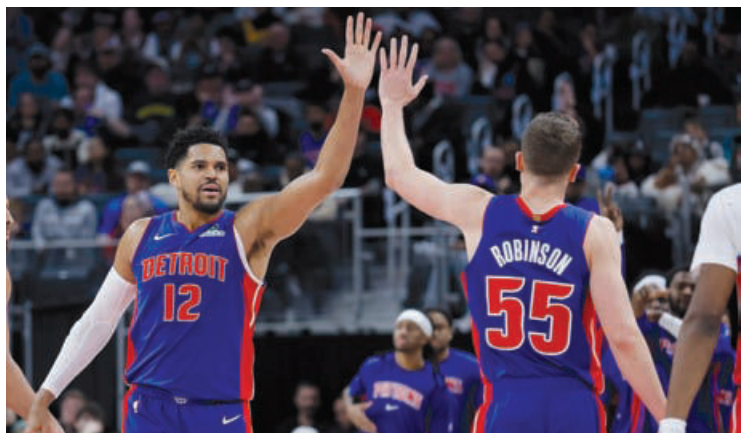
We're down to 10 teams left in the race for a title.

Win by 5 points per game

About 70% of the teams 55 of the 79 that went on to win NBA titles were outscoring opponents by at least 5.0 points per game through the 50-game mark of a season.

Bad news for Denver, Phoenix and the Los Angeles Lakers. (The Lakers aren't at the 50-game mark yet but would need a pair of 55-point win this week or something like that to get their point differential up to the 5-per-game mark.)

We're down to seven.❑



Detroit Pistons forward Tobias Harris (12) celebrates with forward Duncan Robinson (55) during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings, Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026, in Detroit.

Associated Press

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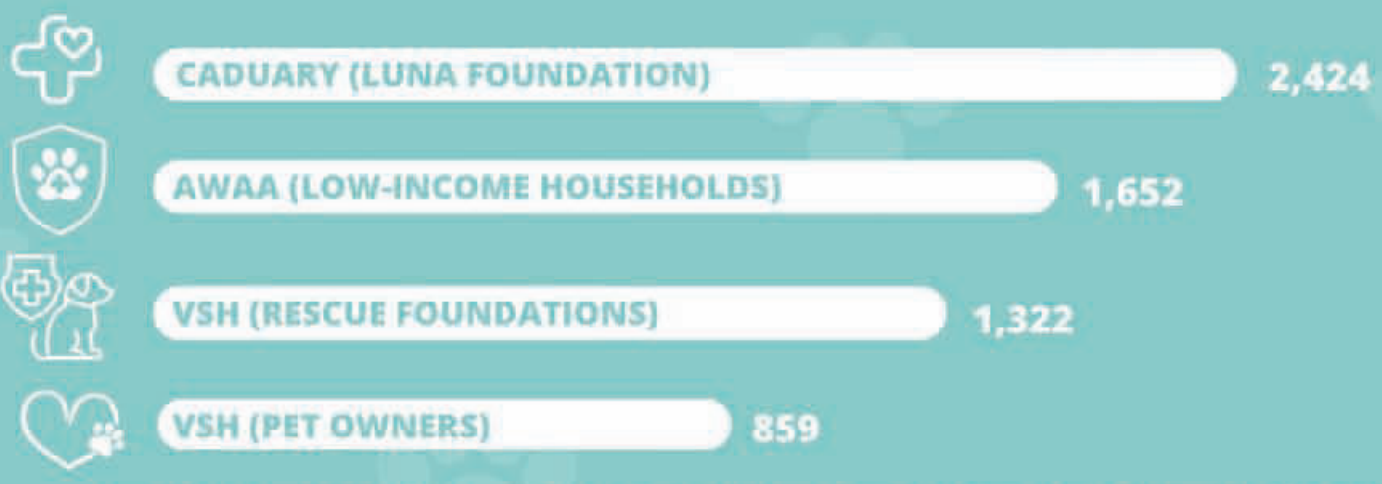

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